

HAWAI‘I QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM II

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What is the Hawai‘i Quality Assurance System II (HQAS)?

A: The HQAS II offers qualified sign language interpreters who do not hold national certification an opportunity to obtain credentials valid within and recognized by the State of Hawai‘i. The system establishes interpreting and transliterating standards at various skill levels. Legislative authority for the credentialing of interpreters via a state screening process is contained in Hawai‘i Revised Statutes 348F-3(3).



The HQAS II is based on the Kansas Quality Assurance Screening, which has a 15-year history of validity and reliability. The KQAS is currently in use in 10 states, primarily in the Mid-America region.

Q: Who should take the test? Why?

A: The HQAS II is intended for interpreters who plan to work professionally within the State of Hawai‘i. It should not be used by sign language students who wish to assess their progress. In Hawai‘i, most state and city/county agencies who employ interpreters establish contract pay rates based on the interpreter’s verified skill level. An HQAS II credential identifies you as a qualified professional.

Q: Will my Hawai‘i credential be recognized on the mainland?

A: The HQAS II is intended for local interpreters who plan to work within the State of Hawai‘i. Some states and jurisdictions may recognize your HQAS II credential depending on their reciprocity regulations. Interpreters who intend to work primarily on the mainland should pursue national certification by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf or by the National Association of the Deaf.

Q: How is the test structured?

A: The system consists of a pre-test workshop, a written test, and a performance test. The performance test is divided into two parts; one part demonstrates the candidate’s interpreting skills (ASL to English, English to ASL), and the other part demonstrates the candidate’s transliterating skills (Conceptually Accurate Signed English (CASE) a.k.a. PSE).

Q: What is the pre-test workshop?

A: HQAS II staff offers a three-hour workshop the day before the performance test. This workshop is designed to give candidates an opportunity to experience the test environment, ask questions, and to become comfortable with the process. The workshop is not intended to teach sign language or interpreting skills. We strongly encourage all applicants to participate in the pre-test workshop, even candidates who are taking the test a second or third time.

Q: How is the written test administered?

A: Complete the Candidate's Application, sign it, and submit it, along with payment, to the Disability and Communication Access Board Office in Honolulu. The written test consists of 50 multiple-choice questions related to interpreting ethics and practices. The HQAS Interpreter Code of Ethics was adopted by the Disability and Communication Access Board on October 19, 2000 and is printed in the HQAS II informational brochure.

Q: Where and when do I take the written test?

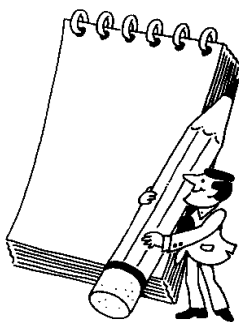
A: The written test is offered on the afternoon of the same day as the pre-test workshop. The pre-test workshop and the written test are scheduled the day before the performance test. Test dates are scheduled as needed, usually once per calendar quarter based on the backlog of applications.

Q: How do I know if I passed the written test?

A: HQAS II staff will score the tests immediately after all candidates have completed the test. You may wait at the test site or staff can call you later that afternoon or evening.

Q: What if I fail the written test?

A: You must pass the written test before taking the performance test. You are allowed three attempts to pass the written test before your application for the performance test is denied. HQAS II staff will work cooperatively with you to schedule additional opportunities to take the written test.



We strongly encourage all candidates to complete appropriate classes in interpreting ethics and practices before attempting the test.

Q: Has the written test been field-tested?

A: Yes. It was given in different types of college classes at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, at Johnson Community College, and at Iowa Western Community College. At all testing sites, good reliability and validity were demonstrated. Task force members were assured that potential applicants could not simply guess and get enough answers correct to pass.

Q: Is there a warm up before the performance evaluation?

A: Yes. There are warm up tapes that accompany each of the actual tapes used for the evaluation. The deaf models on the warm up tapes are the same people used in the performance test. The candidate will have an opportunity to practice with the warm up tapes.

Q: What is the format of the performance test videotapes?

A: Each performance test includes one tape for transliterating (Sign) and another tape for interpreting (ASL). Each tape consists of four sections including sign to voice, interactive, and voice to sign.

Q: Who will be on the HQAS II team reviewing the performance test?

A: Every performance test will be reviewed by six trained evaluators. All evaluators have received appropriate training and are drawn from the local community.

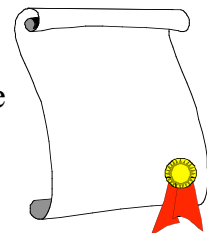
Because we are a small state, the names of the evaluators are confidential. Evaluators will recuse themselves if they have any conflict of interest, personal relationship or if for any other reason they cannot offer a fair and impartial evaluation.

Q: How will I be rated on the performance evaluation?

A: Evaluators use a score sheet to rate your skills according to several different criteria. Scores from all evaluators will be averaged.

Q: How will I know what level I achieved?

A: You will be notified by letter, six to eight weeks after you take the performance test. Candidates will receive a profile of their scores. A profile shows the candidate which skills and features are strongest and which are weakest. For candidates who achieve Level II or higher, DCAB will issue a wallet card listing your name and level.



Q: Will adequate safeguards be established to ensure that the HQAS will be fairly administered?

A: Yes. The test system has been shown to be valid and reliable. If scores returned by the evaluators vary significantly, performance videotapes will be reviewed by additional evaluators.

Q: When may I apply for a new test or a retest?

A: Please see the Retest Waiting Periods listed on the HQAS II application. Generally, candidates are asked to take some time to work on improving their skills before re-testing. Everyone has a bad day. If you scored significantly below your actual ability, work with a qualified mentor to polish any rough spots and then reapply.

If you qualified at a Level II and wish to attempt a Level III or higher, you may reapply after six months or three months if requested by a qualified mentor. You will be given priority scheduling if possible.

You will be asked to pay the candidate's test fee each time you take a performance test. You will not be asked to take the written test again unless your credential has expired.

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